

THE News Letter



April 2002

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Legislative Mind Reading

Not all associations participate in lobbying efforts. If yours is among those that do not, you probably are very happy that influencing local, state or federal representatives is not a part of your job description. But, can you really afford to be complacent?

Regardless of the size or scope of your organization, the day may come when you will need to react to a proposed law or regulation that poses a threat to the interests of your members. Are you ready? What steps would you take to quickly launch an effective grassroots response to the crisis?

Tuesday, April 23 will be your opportunity to learn the answer to these and other questions about how to successfully influence the minds of your legislators. Amy Showalter from the Showalter Group in Columbus, OH will be our guest speaker. In addition to addressing lobbying issues, Ms. Showalter will provide tips on what you must do to rejuvenate your overall existing public affairs program.

R.S.V.P. at Wards Corner will be our host. Registration and networking

begin at 11:45 AM. Lunch will be served at 12:15 PM. The program will begin at approximately 12:45 PM. The cost is \$20 for CSAE members and their guests. Make

your reservation by returning the registration form with your check to Dee Scott, c/o MSA., P.O. Box 36232, Cincinnati, OH 45236. You may also fax your registration to Dee at 984-1539. The deadline for reservations is Thursday, April 18.

R.S.V.P. at Wards Corner is located at 453 Wards Corner Road, just

off I-275. From I-75 or I-71 in Ohio take east I-275 to Wards Corner Road (Exit 54). Turn right and proceed approximately 1/4 mile. R.S.V.P. will be on the left.

If you will be driving from northern Kentucky, take I-275 east across the river and proceed to the Wards Corner exit. Turn left on Wards Corner Road and proceed 1/4 mile to R.S.V.P. (on the left).

Association executives can never be too prepared to deal with a crisis. Join us on April 23 and learn what you will need to do to get a grassroots campaign up and running in your association.





Helping Members to Help Customers

One of the ways that associations add value for members is by helping them to add value in the eyes of their customers. And one way the National Concrete Masonry Association (NCAIA) has done that is by placing its monthly technical bulletins, or TEKS, on its Web site. Members then, for a fee, can make those same technical bulletins available to the architects and engineers that comprise the majority of their clients and prospects.

This service, called E-TEK, debuted last August. "Finally, we can use the Internet to maintain our existing off-line relationships between our members and their clients," says Jeff Greenwald, a professional engineer who is NCMA's director of research and development. NCMA has approximately 400 members, a majority of whom are producers of concrete masonry. Of course, the association will continue to offer the TEKS in print form.

These companies' technical salespeople visit job sites and give information on design, material estimates, and construction practices, usually working with architects

and engineers. Since the 1960s, one of the salespeople's tools, or value propositions, has been distributing the TEKS, which comprise a binder of useful references for design, specification, and construction of concrete masonry assemblies. Members traditionally have purchased the TEKS in bulk for this purpose.

Greenwald says this practice "enables NCMA members to market themselves as expert suppliers. The idea is to get [the TEKS] in every architect's library in the world," he explains. The E-TEK program expands on this and enables NCMA members to build a Web site that is more than static company information.

Through its e-business committee, membership spearheaded the drive to post the TEKS online. Initial research began a few years ago by a group of graduate students at Florida State, who wrote the program. Continuity was then possible as one student became employed by e-walker inc., the firm that developed and now fine-tunes the E-TEK delivery system.

It's a subscription-based system, Greenwald says. "We're selling members the right to place a link to E-TEK right on their Web page. It's exclusive, because the only way a customer can access the online TEK is through our subscribers - they can't get there directly."

NCMA stays in the background. If an architect, for example, goes to www.ncma.org, by choosing a state on the site's map, he or she gets a list of every E-TEK subscriber and can choose one based on location - either the architect's location or the construction site. "So we can steer them without choosing whom to steer them to," he explains. Also, state groups affiliated with NCMA have a link on their site to their E-TEK subscribers.

"It has a business development component," he adds. Some member-subscribers put in a registration interface as well as a contact page so the business can contact the member site where they came from and communicate back."

"To me, the Internet is the medium that allows for the passing on of information about concrete block to users when it is convenient to them," notes Greenwald. "What we're able to do here is to develop relationships we've previously had without the Internet. Developing and offering E-TEK has helped NCMA show leadership. This system has shown that members can get exposure to customers in a new, more convenient way. And we've shown them we can do that through the association."

Contact Jeff Greenwald, director of research and development, National Concrete Masonry Association, at (703) 713-1900 or at jgreenwald@ncma.org. Reprinted with permission from Executive Update, a publication of the Greater Washington Society of Association Executives.

FISH! - The Catch of a Lifetime

By Harry Paul



Reporters from every media market tell the story of the Pike Place Fish Market.

Now, fish mongering is not a glamorous job. No one wanted to grow up and become a fishmonger. But these people who work at the market love their business and have made it world famous.

Not only because

of their trademark - throwing fish across the market and shouting out and repeating everyone's order - but because they bring an attitude, a passion, an energy to their work that is infectious. They show us that no matter what you do you can enjoy your work and be successful as well. People from all over the world want to learn how the Pike Place "Fish Team" does it.

It's about doing things differently. Lou Platt, former CEO of Hewlett Packard, said, "Whatever made you successful in the past, won't in the future." The fishmongers know this well. Once a month they get together to talk about what is working and what needs to be done differently. It's about being fast and flexible, fresh and different. They look at their culture and ask, "How can we make it better?" Their culture is what made them world famous. Theirs is a culture that allows them all to be who they are, with passion, energy, and light-heartedness.

Creating this culture has its rewards beyond being world famous. Ten years ago the market was striving to be no better than its competition (there are several other fish markets at Pike Place alone). With "business as usual" these people almost went out of busi-

ness. That's when one of the younger fishmongers challenged them to do things differently. He challenged them to become world famous, to act like they had something special - and to do so everyday - which caused them to become both world famous and successful.

What once was a good week in sales revenue now represents a bad morning. What changed? The market is the same; ownership is the same; a lot of the employees are the same; and, obviously, everyone still sells the same types of fish. What changed was the culture. As that culture evolved, it became a philosophy and then a passion, one that allowed the fish market to thrive, not just survive. These elements created a strong team culture that provides a cohesive foundation that connects and grounds the staff, provides a template for making decisions, serves as a filter for hiring the right people, and makes it easy for customers to experience their values.

The FISH! philosophy has four parts: (1) Choose your attitude, (2) Play, (3) Be there, and (4) Make their day. Combined, these parts can help you create a strong culture that boosts productivity, increases retention, and improves teamwork and morale - the ingredients needed today for success.

CHOOSE YOUR ATTITUDE. It all starts with attitude. Each day you must ask yourself the question, "Am I choosing the right attitude?" It's a simple choice when you get up in the morning. Are you going to be magnificent or ordinary today? You don't need anyone's permission to be magnificent. Think about the work you do. Is it worthwhile? Are you making a difference? Is it making the world a better place? If you answered, "Yes," to one or more of those questions, you have all you

Recently, I was flying home to San Diego from Dallas, when I struck up a conversation with the woman sitting next to me. I learned she was the CEO of a large service organization. We talked about her business, the economy, our new fears since September 11, and other general topics. Then, I asked her how many people worked at her organization. She stared at me and said, "I'd say about half."

Why are half the people in her organization motivated to work and the rest not? How effective were the half who did work? What was the cost to the company in productivity, retention, and morale? My guess was that those employees who aren't motivated don't enjoy coming to work. They don't have energy or passion for their jobs.

That is what the book FISH! is all about - bringing your whole self to work and wanting to do your best work while you are there. We call it the FISH! philosophy. We use an unlikely workplace case study to make our point - the world-famous Pike Place Fish Market in Seattle, Washington. It's not your ordinary fish market. This one really is famous around the globe - so much so that it's been featured on television shows, such as "Frasier" and in movies such as "Free Willy."

need to choose to be magnificent each day. Think about what you are doing in a different way, no matter what your work is. Are you washing windows or providing clear vision? Are you washing dishes or providing people with a clean, germ-free environment from which to consume food? When you look at work in this way, your choice of attitude is clear and simple. Choose to be magnificent.

PLAY. It's time to loosen up at work. Too many people walk around like their underwear is on too tight. We were all told the same things growing up: Work and play are separate activities. "When you finish your homework you can go play." "When you're done with your chores, you can go play." I even had to change into special clothes before I could play. No wonder we think work and play can't go hand in hand. Yes, work can be fun, no matter what you do. Even Disney made the point that work can be enjoyable. What did the seven dwarfs do while they worked in Snow White the Seven Dwarfs? They whistled. Was their work glamorous? No, they worked in a mine, but they still enjoyed it. You, too, can always find ways to enjoy your work and make it more fun.

BE THERE. Being constantly present is one of the foundations of FISH! Philosophy. It's not just about paying attention, looking people in the eyes, and listening. It's about

understanding your culture, your values, and your mission and how you live them on a day-to-day basis. It's about being part of a team. Being there comes from the heart and from making a difference in people's lives. It's looking for "vision moments," specific times when you can demonstrate the vision and values of the organization.

MAKE THEIR DAY. Making someone's day is all about making him or her say, "Wow! That felt good." It's about the experience people have when they do business with you. What will the customer remember about doing business with you? If you went to a restaurant, and the food was great, but the service was terrible, most people believe they've had a bad dining experience. Likewise, if they eat out, and the food was okay, but the service was outstanding, most people think they've had a great dining experience. The experience a customer has can make an okay product better and a good product great.

The FISH! Philosophy is not only about making people's day at work, but also at home and in all aspects of your life. At my son's last Little League game of the season, my wife, Mary, baked and decorated a quarter-sheet cake for the team. She couldn't make it to the game and asked me to serve the cake to them. She supplied me with paper plates, plastic forks, and napkins. "I can handle that," I told her.

After the game, I told the team, "Mrs. Paul baked this cake and wants me to cut it up in little squares and serve it to you on plates with forks and napkins, so you can eat it like good little kids - or, if you want, you can dive right into the cake and grab a couple of handfuls." The boys, of course, attacked the cake, and each came away with two heaping handfuls and huge cake-smearing smiles. Then, I really made their day when I said, "Your coach is part of this team, too; I'm sure he would love to have some cake, too." A dozen boys spent the next 10 minutes chasing their coach around the baseball diamond with handfuls of cake.

The FISH! philosophy really works. It starts with your attitude - that simple choice of whether you want to make a difference and feel good about what you are doing, regardless of your job. Take your work seriously and yourself less seriously. Constantly look for vision moments to share your culture with your customers and make someone say, "Wow!" I guarantee that making them feel good will make you feel good as well.

Harry Paul is coauthor of the international best-selling book, FISH! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results. Reprinted with permission from Executive Update, a publication of the Greater Washington Society of Association Executives.

CAE -- If Not Now, When?

Are you an association CEO or staff member? Is advancing your career among your goals? Do you believe it is important to demonstrate your competence to your Board and/or your boss?

If you answered "yes" to these questions, then becoming a Certified Association Executive (CAE) should be on the top of your "to do" list this year. Achieving the CAE

designation demonstrates your commitment to your profession and proves that you have the experience, training and broad-based competency required of a recognized leader in the association management profession.

The Cincinnati Society of Association Executives can help you with your application for certification and your preparations for the CAE

exam. CSAE offers a certification review course at no charge to members. The next class will be conducted in the fall of 2002, but planning for application preparation and class schedules will begin shortly. Contact Dee Scott (984-8664) for more details.

It's your career. Isn't it time for you to make the commitment to CAE?